



Butterfly &
Other
Invertebrates Club Inc.
Newsletter

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AIMS OF ORGANISATION

- To establish a network of people growing butterfly host plants;
- To hold information meetings about invertebrates;
- To organise excursions around the theme of invertebrates e.g. butterflies, fireflies, ants, dragonflies, beetles, freshwater habitats, and others;
- To promote the conservation of the invertebrate habitat;
- To promote the keeping of invertebrates as alternative pets;
- To promote research into invertebrates;
- To encourage the construction of invertebrate friendly habitats in urban areas.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

If you want to submit an item for publication the following deadlines apply:

March issue – February 21st;

June issue – May 21st;

September issue – August 21st;

December issue – November 21st

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A quarterly meeting is now being scheduled in order to plan club activities and the newsletter. The next meeting is being held on Thursday 4th February, 1999 at John Moss' home. Please phone John on 07 3245 2997 for directions.



EDITORIAL

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone the Season's Greetings. Welcome to our new club members. Our membership has grown from approximately 40 to around 75 in the last few months. That's great news. We hope to see you at our meetings and excursions. Please let us know what you would like the club to do.

The last few months have been a busy time, attending fairs and festivals and promoting the poster. Attending fairs and holding stalls is a great way to meet new people and raise awareness of our Club. We have attended the Society for Growing Australian Plants Spring Plant Sale, the Brisbane Water Festival, the Hinterland Nature Day at Tambourine Mountain, and the Caboolture Region Environment Education Centre's Butterflies and Weeds Workshop. Other members have been busy liaising with other environment groups.

Our Brisbane City Council small environmental grant to work on the Fritillary Project will be completed in February. When completed we will have display material for the Fritillary, and have worked with five community groups working with parklands and made many other contacts.

Our end of year function is to be held looking at SOWN's revegetation site at The Gap. Club members are actively involved in this project. (Please see further in Newsletter for details.) All members are welcome to attend. Our AGM is to be held on Saturday 23rd January and will be followed by an excursion into Toohey Forest to look for ant associated butterflies. More details in the program. Please consider attending this activity.

Helen Schwencke

IN THIS ISSUE

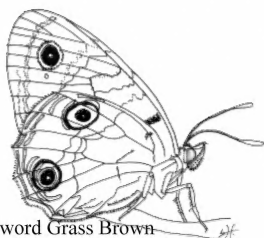
Excursion Reports.....	4
Reports.....	7
Swallowtail Butterfly Poster	12
Bring Butterflies Back to your Backyard.....	14
Creature Notes	17
Teaching Tips	19
Plant Profile	21
Swallowtail Butterfly Poster	12
Book Review	22
World Wide Web Sites to Watch.....	22
Ads and Exchanges.....	22
Butterfly and Other Invertebrates Club Programme	23
Acknowledgements.....	24
Are You a Member	24



Macleay Island

A joint outing of a few BOIC members and other butterfly host plant authorities to Macleay Island took place on the 11th October, 1998. Our group which included Don Sands, Murdock de Baar, Glen Leiper, Frank Jordan, Judith Anderson and John Moss were invited by local bushcare convenor and butterfly enthusiast Meryl Dobe to find and identify butterflies, hostplants and significant vegetation sites.

Meryl and others had previously compiled a list of about 48 species which included 6 skippers and 11 blues. We were able to add a further 7 skippers and 4 blues by the end of the day. However, we were not able to confirm the presence of the Swordgrass Brown on the island, although two of its hostplants, the Sawsedges *Gahnia sieberiana* and *G. clarkei* were present in profusion at one reasonably extensive site. We considered it possible that bushfires had caused the local extinction of the species, but we felt a return visit in the late summer or autumn was worthwhile, for a final check.



Sword Grass Brown

We felt that as the habitat was intact, this was a situation where restocking from the mainland would most likely lead to a successful result. Meryl assured us that bushfires were less likely to occur due to a better environmental awareness and positive attitude amongst the locals.

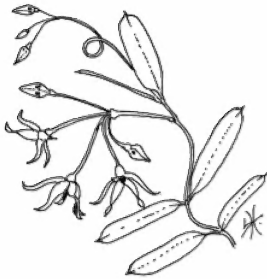
A cursory search of the island also failed to find any *Pararistolochia praevensosa*, the hostplant of the Richmond Birdwing butterfly which was once a visitor to these Bay Islands. Amongst the highlights were the feeding at flowers of the River Mangrove (*Aegiceras corniculatum*), of the two lycaenids – Copper Jewel (*Hypochrysops apelles*) and Margarita Blue (*Candalides margarita*). The Dull Jewel (*H. epicuris*) was searched for, and it eventually turned up the following week in Grey Mangroves on the mainland at Redland Bay. No Ant-blues were seen.



Black & White Tiger

A large colony of Black and White ("Swamp") Tigers was seen at one site where there was a large amount of the hostplant (*Cynanchum carnosum*) trailing between the mangroves and swamp oaks. At another site, where the swamp oaks (*Casuarina glauca*) were infested with the Needle-leaved Mistletoe (*Amyema*





Mangrove Milkpod

cambagei), we found the Satin Azure (*Ogyris amaryllis*) with its brilliant metallic blue upperside flashing in the morning sun.

John Moss
November 1998

Jim Johnston, Frank Jordan and the writer made a short visit to a sandstone based ridge at Murphy's Creek, west of Gatton, on 30th October, 1998. The object of this visit was to attempt to locate a patch of an undescribed large *Boronia* species which is thought to be a hostplant for the Satin Blue butterfly also seen in this area.

Although the *Boronia* and the butterfly were not encountered, we found good evidence of the presence of the Yellow-spot Jewel (*Hypochrysops byzos*) as there was fresh "lycaenid-type" chewings on the surface of two species of *Pomaderris*. We decided that a nocturnal revisit with torches was the only way to accurately confirm our suspicions.

Two days prior to this, two of us were checking out a good mistletoe site on a back road near Helidon at about 2 pm, when we encountered a female Rare Red-eye (*Chaetocneme denitza*) which was quietly feeding at the flowers of a lantana bush. As neither of us had ever seen one before, this was quite an exciting event. Further searching failed to find any others, nor any of the few known or suspected hostplants (*Lophostemons* and *Tristaniopses*). It remains a mystery as to why she was there, where she came from and what was her hostplant!

A few days later further up the range at Ravensbourne we collected a female Glistening Blue (*Theclinesthes scintillata*) feeding or ovipositing on flowers of an Acacia in Jim's garden. This record, another lycaenid, two more whites and three extra skippers increased the Ravensbourne butterfly list to 60 species. The presence of the Four-bar Swordtail (*Protographium leosthenes*) seen earlier in the month during the visit of a group from the Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club, has created a bit of a mystery. Its two south-east Queensland recorded hostplants in the Annonaceae (Custard Apple family) (*Polyalthia nitidissima* and *Melodorum leichhardtii*) have not been recorded from the area! Presumably further searching will eventually locate the hostplant.

John Moss
November 1998



Report of Excursion to Toona Rainforest Gardens, 12 Pharlap Avenue, Mudgeeraba, the property of Graham and Beth McDonald and family on Saturday, 21 November by eight members of the BOIC.

This property was acquired by the owners in 1976 and covers an area of 1.12 acres (0.4ha). The land was originally old grazing land cleared over a century ago and in 1976 was covered by *Sittaria* and *Baccharis halimifolia* (groundsel bush). No other vegetation other than a few *Eucalyptus* trees along the back fence was present.

In the last 22 years, the owners have planted over 600 species of trees and about the same number of species of smaller plants which have converted the area to a wildlife paradise, now recognised as “Land for Wildlife”.

The original idea was to create a rainforest habitat of ½ acre in area to reduce maintenance and provide propagation material for the nursery. The plants were the focus of interest at this stage and nobody told us that plants attract a vast array of wildlife – the area now supports a species abundance usually found over much larger areas. New butterfly species are still finding their way into the “garden” and breeding there.

The rainforest plot was started in 1984 in full sun with mulch consisting of newspaper and grass clippings. Many setbacks from too much rain, not enough rain and frost took their toll but eventually after 4 years of weeding and mulching the canopy closed and work decreased. Today the shade and root competition excludes all but the most persistent weeds (eg *Asparagus*) and maintenance involves only a few minutes per week.

Orchard Swallowtail

So to this setting, eight people arrived and set about exploring the insect life. John Moss, Frank Jordan, Helen Schwencke, Simon Jordan, Rosylin and Lindsay Popple and Lois and John Hughes disappeared in all directions along the many pathways and found lots of interesting treasures.

Some butterflies encountered on this overcast day included: Common Albatross (*Appias paulina ega*); Orchard Swallowtail (*Papilio aegeus*); Evening Brown (*Melanitis leda bankia*); Blue Tiger (*Danaus hamatus*); Common Brown Ringlet (*Hypocista metirius*); Common Moonbeam (*Philiris innotata*); Pencilled Blue (*Candalides absimilis*) and Painted Lady (*Vanessa kershawi*).



(John Moss ‘borrowed’ one of the larvae on a *Bracteantha bracteata*). Other Skippers and Small Blues were seen but not positively identified.

Lindsay Popple kept vanishing and then reappearing with either live cicadas, paralysed cicadas or cicada ‘husks’. This amazing person can identify practically every local cicada species just by listening to its call and he located an astonishing 13 species on this 0.4 hectare property. Species positively identified were: Floury Baker (*Abriacta curvicosta*); Black Tree Ticker (*Birrima varians*); Small Bottle Cicada (*Chlorocysta vitripennis*); Paperback Cicada (*Cicadetta hackeri*); Bladder Cicada (*Cystosoma saundersii*); Large Bottle Cicada (*Glaucopsaltria viridis*); Razor Grinder (*Henicopsaltria eydouxii*); Sprinkler Squeaker (*Pauropsalta annulata*); Bark Squeaker (*Pauropsalta corticinus*); Clanger (*Psaltoda clairpennis*); Yellowbelly (*Psaltoda harrisii*); Brown Bunyip (*Tamasa tristigma*); Treetop Ticker – Undescribed species.

In February, 1998, the owners recorded about 45 species of local butterflies in the garden which proves that by planting host plants some success can be achieved after a few years of waiting. Many people may be unimpressed by the untidy appearance of some of the host plants, regarding them as weeds. This concept of tidiness is however one which I do not regard as important. Tidiness and order are simply concepts in the mind of an observer and a ‘tidy’ garden is very rarely a home for breeding butterflies. As well as being ‘sterile’, this style of garden is labour intensive.

Afternoon tea, and Frank was treated to bush tucker, *Syzgium fibrosum*. The response was not overwhelming. Later homemade scones with Davidson’s Plum Jam were relished by all.

A selection of unusual butterfly host plants were sought and purchased from the nursery with most of the club members finding at least one or two plants suited to their already crowded gardens. It was soon dark and people slowly departed to the evening sounds of cicadas droning on into the night.

Graham McDonald

REPORTS

This is a report, compiled by David Barnes, of his talk to the June meeting of BOIC
Planting for Wildlife

I have been creating a wildlife garden for the past 15 years on a 575 square metre block at Bracken Ridge. My wife and I started the garden from scratch, so the slides I am about to show you are the results of our own efforts. Before we started there was rank grass, rubbish and a few scrappy exotic shrubs and trees.



When planting a garden to attract wildlife the first factor to consider is what habitats are near to where you live. Near my home at Bracken Ridge is a range of habitats including:

- coastal woodlands, mangroves, freshwater wetlands at Tinchi Tamba Wetlands Reserve;
- reed swamp (where magpie geese roost and they often fly over my house in “V” formation at six o’clock in the morning making their distinctive honking sound on their way to their feeding grounds near the South Pine River) and eucalypt forest at Third Lagoon;
- melaleuca forest and banksias at Deagon Wetlands Reserve; and
- Boondall Wetlands Reserve.

Various birds and other wildlife visit or have colonised our garden from these areas. Grey kangaroos visit the Tinchi Tamba Wetlands Reserve by swimming across the Pine river from the Pine Shire. The surrounding habitats and the wildlife they contain will determine what wildlife is likely to visit your wildlife garden. Some people get bitterly disappointed because they have planted koala food trees but get no koalas, until you explain that there are no colonies of koalas within an accessible distance from their home.

I encourage the use of local native plants as much as possible. The reason for this is that a lot of the exotic plants that we use in our gardens end up becoming weeds in the local bushland, displacing the local native plants and decreasing the value of the local habitat for many of the wildlife species which use it. I also advocate planting a diverse range of plants to encourage a diverse range of animals. I believe one of the most important parts of any wildlife habitat is the 30 centimetres above the ground where many of the insects and other small animals such as skinks live. These in turn support many of the other animals such as hawks and other predators. Plants I have used in this layer include:

- Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*);
- Wallaby Grass (*Oplismenus* sp.) which is a good ground cover for skinks etc.;
- Native Plectranthus (*Plectranthus* sp.) the Australian equivalent of Coleus, a common exotic garden plants. Its blue flowers attract hoverflies and it grows in full sun to part shade, self seeding to fill in all the unoccupied nooks and crannies;
- *Hovea* sp. which are fed on by leaf miners (when wildlife gardening you have to put up with some disfigurement of your plants as spraying is likely to kill good insects and the birds and other animals which feed on them! Even honey eating birds require insects to feed their young.); and
- *Hardenbergia violacea*, which also provides habitat for, ground dwelling animals and nectar for insects.



Other plants include:

- Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorana*) which comes in white or the form which I have which is golden yellow;
- *Hibiscus splendens*, which was planted to attract the very attractive Hibiscus Harlequin Beetle is one of 4-5 species of native hibiscus in south east Queensland;
- Brisbane Golden Wattle (*Acacia fimbriata*) which attracts numerous insects to its numerous flowers and provides habitat for small birds. It reaches maturity in 4 -5 years.
- Yellow Prickly Moses (*Acacia hubbardiana*) that have seeds which are eaten by the Pale-headed Rosellas;
- Orchids of various species. These plants often have specific insect pollinators;
- Hairy Pittosporum (*Pittosporum revolutum*) a narrow upright plant to 3 metres high which is an excellent screen and its sticky seed is eaten by birds;
- Native Lasiandra (*Melastoma affine*), which is the native equivalent of the Tibouchina. Its mauve flowers attract native solitary bees and the edible fruit is eaten by Silveryeyes;
- Hop Bush (*Dodonea triquetra*) which as seed by some of our native pigeons;
- Running Postman (*Kennedia rubicunda*) a light scrambling vine which has red flowers attractive to the Brown Honeyeater;
- Swamp Banksia (*Banksia robur*) which grows in the wallum areas near the North Coast. This is popular with Honeyeaters which stand on top of the flower to feed on the nectar;
- *Grevillea banksii* which is often crossed with other grevilleas to produce many of the cultivars popularly grown today;
- Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*) which is being developed for the cut flower trade. This particular specimen took seven years to flower. They come from Northern New South Wales. *Doryanthes palmeri* is more local and is found in rainforest;
- Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*) which is growing in the next door neighbours' yard. The flowers attract flying foxes, parrots and other nectivorous species as well as an observation post for those birds, such as birds of prey which like to look around for their next meal;

I have tried to work with the landscape rather than try and grow plants, which are not suited to the conditions, as often people do. In the front yard are mainly species from dry eucalypt forest, including native grasses and Paper Daisies (*Helichrysum* sp.). Whereas down the eastern side where it is wetter, I have used mainly callistemons, leptospermums and melaleucas. Another thing I have done is to get rid of most of the lawn grass, which used to take me an hour-and-a-half to mow. It now takes me ten



minutes with a push mower. Many people have lawn out of habit but it is not particularly useful for wildlife. In another area, which used to be very muddy I have constructed a dry watercourse. Frogs occasionally breed in it during prolonged periods of rain. Rainforest species have been used down the back around the small remaining patch of lawn to take advantage of the extra moisture there.

There are three birdbaths in the garden, which have been placed on 1.8 metre high posts to prevent the local cats from making a meal of the birds whilst they are bathing. Many of the birds that visit come in just to use these, including Mangrove Honeyeaters. Wasps, spider wasps and dragonflies use them also.

There are four ponds in the garden, one of which, is an old wooden sandpit, which has been lined with a pond liner. Some useful local species of fish which we have put into the ponds to prevent mosquitoes breeding include Pacific Blue-eyes (*Pseudomugil signifer*), Crimson Spotted Rainbow Fish (*Melanotaenia duboulayi*), and Soft Spined Sunfish (*Rhadinocentrus ornatus*). In addition there are six varieties of frogs in the garden; Scarlet-sided Pobblebonks; Ornate Burrowing Frogs; many Striped Marshfrogs; Graceful Treefrogs; Common Treefrogs; and Eastern Sedgefrogs.

Large, round rocks placed in and around the edges of the pond (so that the water level comes half way up them) can provide shelter for frogs which hide under them during the day then come out at night. Some of the frogs in the garden were “rescued” from a frog habitat at the local TAFE College, which contained about ten species of frog, but has unfortunately now been turned into a carpark.

We have two resident Common Tree Snakes, which come out and hunt, in the fishponds at the front of the house. One of these gets in to one of the ponds, rests its tail on a plant pond on the bottom, and then attempts to catch the native fish. As Nature Search coordinator for the northern part of Brisbane I received a call from one of my volunteers, who was upset because the Common Tree Snakes were eating her frogs. But if you have that many frogs that the snakes are hunting them, you must be doing something right and should expect this predation as part of the natural cycle. Frog ponds should be placed away from your bedrooms and those of your neighbours, as frogs croaking all night when you are already having trouble getting to sleep can just add to your misery.

The garden has a dense understorey, which provides habitat for ground dwelling wildlife and also keeps the weeds down. Weeds tend to colonise where there are spaces for them to grow.

Hedges are an excellent way of marking property boundaries and providing wildlife habitat at the same time. These are very common in England, where they provide



habitat for small birds, spiders and small mammals, but are not so popular in southeast Queensland.

Dry stone walls provide habitat for skinks and frogs and should be considered where a retaining wall is required.

I have also provided nest boxes for birds (and also for insectivorous bats). Unfortunately one of these was taken over by starlings (an introduced bird) so I ended up making the entrance hole smaller by inserting a piece of plywood with a smaller hole over the existing entrance. This effectively excluded the starlings from the box - though they tried for a couple of days afterwards to get back in. Nest boxes for Brushtail Possums, Kookaburras, Ringtail Possums, can be obtained from Frank Box (Boxes' Boxes). It is important to place those nest boxes you want birds to use so that there is a clear flight line to the entrance.

Once you have completed your own garden you may be able to help your neighbours plant their gardens for wildlife! This will provide a larger area of habitat and this may encourage a wider range of species to your own garden.

Keep records of what wildlife (butterflies, frogs, reptiles, birds, mammals) visits the garden. This way you can check your records to see what species are regular or only occasional visitors. Overall I have recorded 60 species of native invertebrates of various kinds. These include a large specimen of the slug (*Treboniophorus graeffei*) Golden Orb Weaver Spider, St Andrews Cross Spider, Net Casting Spider, Wanderer Butterfly, Joseph's Coat Moth, and Praying Mantis. There are six species of native reptiles (and the introduced Asian House Gecko) which I provide habitat for by laying branches on the ground. There are 61 species of native birds including Brown Honeyeater and Scarlet Honeyeater, which have nested in the garden. There are also at least two species of native mammals. The species, which come into the garden, have changed over time as the structure of the garden has changed.



Wanderer

Happy gardening! David Barnes.



SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY POSTER

Have you ever wondered what those strange looking caterpillars were on your citrus trees or what pretty chrysalises would turn into ? Do you ever wish those glorious butterflies you see floating so gracefully through your garden would linger a lot longer? Well, we may be able to help you.

The BOIC has produced a full colour, 500 x 700 mm poster of the Lifecycles of the Swallowtail Butterflies of coastal Southern Queensland and Northern New South Wales which illustrates 10 beautiful butterflies in glorious colour, from the petite and delicate to the big and bold.

The journey starts at ground level and proceeds right up to the tree tops, from dainty ground cover plants, to shrubs, twining vines and majestic trees.

Illustrated are the eggs, and where they are most likely to be located. Sometimes the caterpillars change colour dramatically as they grow, so the different stages are shown where possible. Even the chrysalises are well camouflaged, coloured and textured to render them almost invisible to prying eyes. Sometimes the male and female butterflies are dramatically different and these too are shown, together with the native host plant so necessary to nurture the caterpillar to maturity. Alternative host plants are also listed where applicable. Some of these being plants we are already familiar with.,

If some of these plants were to be included in our gardens we would be placing the welcome mat out for these beautiful creatures to make our gardens their home.

Seven of the species illustrated were photographed from eggs laid on plants in Helen and Frank's small, inner city West End garden, thus proving the point of the poster, which is that growing the appropriate plants enhances your local environment. Two other species, the Four Bar Swordtail and the Macleay's Swallowtail, which have visited the West End garden, were photographed from larvae donated by Club members, Bob Millar and the Mt. Glorious Biological Centre.

What an inspiration that is to all of us to include some of these plants in our gardens. Many butterflies are becoming less common and even endangered because their host plants are disappearing from the wild and people are not aware that each species of butterfly has its own plant or group of plants that provide the food the caterpillars need to bring it to maturity, eventually emerging as our beautiful butterflies.



The poster has been in development for 18 months. It represents the combined work of many people, especially Butterfly Club members, who have donated their expertise, assistance and support, but most particularly that of Helen Schwencke and Lois Hughes. Helen obtained the funding, developed the concept, photographed 9 of the lifecycles, obtained use of Richmond Birdwing lifecycle slides thanks to Don Sands at C.S.I.R.O. , did the lettering and pulled the project together.

With great attention to detail, Lois developed the detailed design for and illustrated the host plants in a wonderful gouache and water-colour painting.

It has been a great collaborative effort. The slides were then superimposed on the painting of the host plants by a commercial graphics company and printed by a commercial printer both with good reputations for their work. The poster has been celloglazed for protection and durability.

In order to ensure that all the details were accurate, both the Queensland Herbarium and the Australian National Insect Collection were consulted about the current correct names for both the plants and butterflies. Dr. Michael Braby at the Australian National Insect Collection is currently in the process of revising the authoritative text on Australia's butterflies. In this new text some of the common names of butterflies will be changed. In order to remain current for longer, the poster has adopted the proposed new common names.

The lifecycles and hostplants illustrated include:

Macleay's Swallowtail (*Graphium macleayanum*), host plant: Socketwood (*Daphnandra* sp. McPherson Range)

Pale Triangle (*Graphium eurypylus*) (also known as Pale-green Triangle), host plant: Canary Beech (*Polyalthia nitidissima*)

Blue Triangle (*Graphium sarpedon*), host plant: Three-veined Laurel (*Cryptocarya triplinervis*)

Dainty Swallowtail (*Papilio anactus*) (also known as Dingy Swallowtail), host plant: Native Fingerlime (*Microcitrus australasica*)

Orchard Swallowtail (*Papilio aegaeus*), host plant illustrated: Lanoline Bush (*Zieria smithii*) also known as Sandfly Zieria

Clearwing Swallowtail (*Cressida cressida*) (also known as Big Greasy), host plant: Cressida Pipeflower (*Aristolochia* sp. aff.

Richmond Birdwing (*Ornithoptera richmondii*), host plant: Birdwing Vine (*Pararistolochia praevенosa*)



Four-barred Swordtail (*Protographium leosthenes*), host plant: Zig Zag Vine (*Melodorum leichhardtii* formerly *Rauwenhoffia leichhardtii*)

Fuscous Swallowtail (*Papilio fuscus*) (also known as Capaneus butterfly), host plant: Lime Berry (*Micromelum minutum*)

Chequered Swallowtail (*Papilio demoleus*), host plant: Emu's Foot (*Cullen tenax* formerly *Psoralea tenax*)

The poster has a recommended retail price of \$12.00, with a Club members price of \$8.00, postage costs an extra \$5.00. All proceeds from sales will go to promoting butterfly gardening and conservation projects.

Posters & membership of the Butterfly & Other Invertebrates Club Inc. available by mail order from PO Box 2041, Runcorn, Qld 4113, and from bookshops covering environmental and natural history issues, and butterfly house.

BRING BUTTERFLIES BACK TO YOUR BACKYARD

(Contd. from September issue)

A plant which every gardener needs to be encouraged to plant is the Pipeflower (*Pararistolochia* sp.). There are a number of species, *P. praevenosa* and *P. laheyana* which are host to the magnificent green and yellow Richmond Birdwing (*Ornithoptera richmondia*) which is a close relative of the very spectacular Cairns Birdwing. Reports have it that this butterfly once swarmed in Brisbane's streets in the 1890's. Unfortunately it is now rarely seen in Brisbane although it does occur fairly close to Brisbane, and would be highly likely to come back if it had something to eat.

Richmond Birdwing



The butterfly does have to face a major problem. The introduced Dutchman's Pipe, *Aristolochia elegans*, which is more commonly planted in gardens, attracts this butterfly to lay its eggs on it. The caterpillars do not develop to full size on these plants, and so die.

These caterpillars grow to a very plump cheerio size before they pupate, so if you grow the host plants and are lucky enough to get some of the grubs you may be quite surprised when you discover their voracious appetites and find your plant being denuded - that is why you grew it!

There are a few other plants which are dead certainties to bring butterflies to your garden. The Golden Rain (*Cassia*



fistula) while not a native host plant is a good food source for the Lemon Migrant butterfly (*Catopsilia pomona*). The native host, *Cassia brewsteri*, does not produce as much of the soft new growth preferred as a food source by the tiny newly-hatch caterpillars. While the caterpillars are green with a black and white racing stripe down each side and the chrysalis is not especially spectacular, except for how it strings itself up and manages to split out of its caterpillar sling and still stay suspended, the butterflies are a lovely shade of lemon to lime yellow. In summer the Golden Rain trees along Vulture St in South Brisbane sometimes come alive with these delightful creatures. The butterflies fly so fast the only place where you can look at them for long enough is while they are laying eggs.

These caterpillars are also particularly useful educationally. From egg to pupa takes one week, and the butterfly hatches out about a week later as well, so they are very quick and children are less likely to lose interest in keeping them. However, if you ever bring any inside -- Be Warned, it is much easier to do this if you have a tree very nearby. One year we did this, but because the caterpillars only like the very new growth it dries out very quickly and you really need fresh supplies every day. So every day we walked down to the nearest plants, a 20 minute plus round trip and collected a few twigs. No matter how carefully we checked for eggs or new caterpillars, every day we would bring one or more home, and then kept them anyway. What could have been a two to three week project grew to three months as we kept raising more and more caterpillars. Luckily I was pregnant and needed the walk and the birth came at the end of the butterfly season!

The Orchard Swallowtail (*Papilio aegeus*) is an elegant black and white butterfly. The male is mostly black while the females have more white and red and blue spots on them. If you grow any citrus you are likely to have come across its caterpillars which are green and a bit spiky with brown and white diagonal stripes. A very interesting feature of these caterpillars is that when annoyed two bright red very pungent protrusions come out of its head. The citrus odour they extrude is incredibly strong. They seem to do very little damage to a decent sized tree, though may set back a very young tree. The native host plants include the Native Finger-Lime (*Microcitrus australasica*). Their pupa are fascinating to watch splitting out of their caterpillar skin while remaining a thread sling.

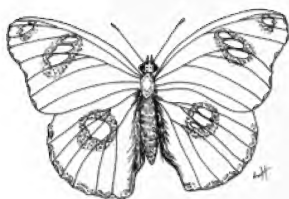


The Native Passionfruit (*Aurantia passiflora*) with its lovely large light red flowers is the host of the Glasswing butterfly caterpillar (*Acraea andromacha*). These caterpillars are gregarious, so you find them in groups happily munching away at your plant which loses leaves at a time. Unfortunately, while you may have the plant the butterflies may not decide to lay their eggs on your vine, though sooner or later you will get a group of these caterpillars. They prefer the native passionvine to the introduced corky passionvine which can be a garden pest. The pupae are basically white with an interesting geometric design on them in dark brown. The top wing of the butterfly is transparent and hence the butterfly's name.



Glasswing

Even if you don't want to make an effort to encourage butterflies there are some common weeds which if left in your garden will sometimes play host to these beautiful creatures. A common small leaved



Common Eggfly

weed which does not have a common name and is resistant to nearly every herbicide is *Phyllanthus tenellus*. It gets a pretty little bright yellow butterfly and Pigface (*Portulaca sp.*) gets a large and spectacular but unkindly named Common Eggfly (*Hypolimnys bolina*). The male has blue patches on its wings, the female white and orange and the caterpillar is a cute spiky little creature. Every spike on its body is covered in even more spikes which certainly don't encourage touching it.

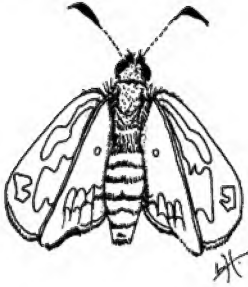
With a few of these plants in your garden, your children's and your own pleasure in your garden can be very greatly enhanced and their observation skills will be encouraged.

Helen Schwencke



CREATURE NOTES

Creature Note # 12 – Follow up notes on excursion to Redlands sites Saturday 11th July, 1998.

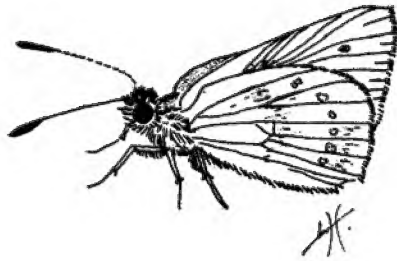


Greenish Darter

Readers will recall that two skipper larvae were found on grasses during this outing – one on *Ischaemum australe* and the other on Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) – both duly pupated and adults emerged on the 11th and 22nd September. That from the Blady Grass was a *Telicota ancilla* or Greenish Darter and that from the *Ischaemum*, *Pelopidas agna dingo* or Common Swift. These are both confirmations of earlier hostplant records, and as such quite noteworthy.

The *Telicota* larva was pale green without any other markings, its pupa, a tan colour, was 20 mm x 4 mm and of the general *Telicota*/*Ocybadistes* shape.

The *Pelopidas* larva was a similar pale green but with paired, frontolateral, dark brown stripes on the head and paired, parallel, yellowish, ½ mm wide, dorso-lateral longitudinal stripes on the body. The pupa was pale green with a sharply pointed pupal cap about 24 x 4 mm, and the adult emerged three weeks after pupation. This is quite a drab, dull greenish-brown skipper – very similar to *Toxidia peron* (the Large Dingy Skipper) – so the newly proposed name “Dingy Swift” is quite appropriate.



Common Swift

On the other hand, the Greenish Darter on the upperside has bright orange markings on a brown background and on the underside a dull orange sometimes with a greenish suffusion. The newly proposed name “Green Darter” is somewhat misleading, as the butterfly is predominantly orange.

Further details on these two skippers appear in Common and Waterhouse’s “Butterflies of Australia”.

John Moss
November 1998



Creature Note # 13

On the 8th November, 1998, during a Queensland Naturalists Club excursion to "Drapers Forest" in the Samford Valley west of Brisbane, several butterfly species were observed, including larvae of Blue Tigers (*Tirumala hamata*) and Common Crows (*Euploea core*) which were found on the Corky Milk Vine (*Secamone elliptica*), a known host-plant.



Blue Tiger Larva

Recent experiences have shed some doubt on whether the Blue Tiger regularly utilises another recorded local hostplant,

Cynanchum (formerly *Ischnostemma*)

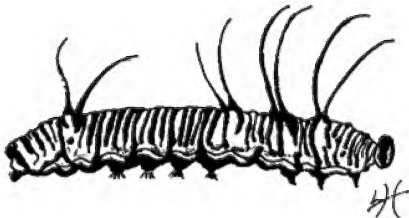
carnosum which grows near mangrove and saltpan areas on the coast and islands. I have seen Black and White Tigers (*Danaus affinis*) and Lesser Wanderers (*Danaus chrysippus*) utilising this plant but never Blue Tigers.

On a previous QNC excursion to Scawfell Island off Mackay, in September 1994, many hundreds of thousands of Blue Tigers were encountered in their seasonal aggregations, but there was no sign that they were using or had used the very prolific *Cynanchum carnosum* as a hostplant in that situation. Also, although I have had potted plants of *C. carnosum* in my garden, I have never seen the Blue Tigers ovipositing on it, nor seen larvae on it at any time.

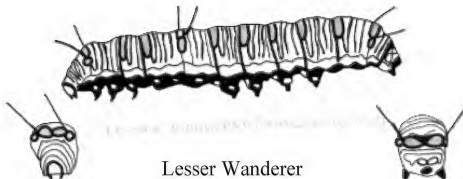


Frank Jordan has had similar experiences, and he recently discovered Blue Tiger larvae on his *Secamone elliptica* but nil on the *C. carnosum*

Secamone elliptica



Common Australian Crow



Lesser Wanderer



The original observation of Blue Tiger larvae on *Ischnostemma carnosum* by Garry Sankowsky was at Redland Bay in March 1969, as recorded in the Australian Entomological Magazine Vol.2 No.3 of February 1975. The BOIC will be visiting this site in February next year.

We would like to know if anybody has seen Blue Tiger larvae on the *Cynanchum* in recent times or has reared the butterfly through to maturity on it.

For details of the Scawfell Island Blue Tiger aggregation see the Queensland Naturalist Vol. 33 Nos. 5-6 (December 1995).

*John Moss
November 1998*

TEACHING TIPS

The Balcony Butterfly - Common Crow

The metallic silver or gold chrysalis of the Common Crow butterfly is one of the wonders of the insect world. Long past their childhood years, most adults still remember these mysterious ornaments appearing amongst the oleander bushes. Some would have been lucky enough to see the caterpillars and marvel at their ability to chomp through the toxic oleander leaves.

It was the toxic nature of the oleander plant that made it difficult to raise this butterfly safely in a classroom situation. But this is a versatile butterfly with several different host plants, one of which is quite noteworthy.

This is the weeping fig (*Ficus benjamina*). Increasing numbers of people are living in units or houses with large verandahs. The weeping fig makes an excellent potted plant for these shady situations. It is also a perfect habitat for the Common Crow. Many a unit dweller has been surprised to find the leaves stripped from their plants and replaced with small shiny Christmas ornaments. Alarming for some, but a blessing for those wanting to keep a direct link with the natural world, even in a unit.

For a classroom situation a basic approach would be to obtain a large potted specimen of the weeping fig and locate it on a quiet shady and wind free verandah. If there are Common Crows in the vicinity they will usually find the plant. They lay their yellow eggs singly on fresh young growth.

Once the eggs have been noticed, the plant can be brought into the classroom and progress monitored by the children. In the wild these caterpillars are heavily



parasitized by tachinid flies and these need to be excluded by fly screen or mosquito netting.

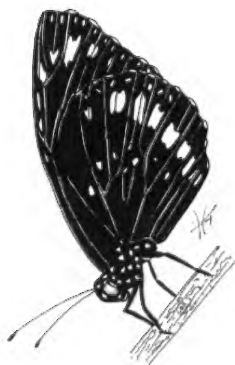
Various ways of achieving the protection of caterpillars are possible. One popular method is to cut a large hole in the lid of a broccoli box and cover it with flyscreen. A small plant can then be placed in the box once it has been placed in an upright position, with the smallest side of the box as its base. Remember that the plant will need light, but not direct sunlight. Large aquariums, covered by flyscreen or netting on their smallest side can also be used.

The caterpillars, which are brownish and have four pairs of long filaments, three at the head end and one at the tail. They develop quickly and usually pupate on the plant. The chrysalis stage lasts about two weeks, but this can vary according to the temperature. The chrysalis turns black before the butterfly emerges. The newly emerged butterfly needs enough room below it for its wings to pump up and hang down while they dry.



Common Crow pupa

A chrysalis that darkens but does not produce a butterfly has probably been parasitised, especially if a thread descends from the chrysalis. The thread is produced when the maggot of the tachinid fly exits the chrysalis. Sometimes it is possible to find the fly pupa underneath the chrysalis, and keep it in a container until it emerges. This could be the starting point for a discussion on the balance of nature and why caterpillars don't end up eating everything.



Common Crow

The host plant needs to have fresh soft growth for the small freshly hatched caterpillars. If there is none on the host plant the female butterfly will usually not lay any eggs.

If no eggs are laid at the school, some of the children may find some on plants at home and bring them to school. They can be kept in a container until they hatch and can then be transferred to the host plant.

Eggs are usually produced in Spring and Summer. In winter, the adult butterflies congregate in the thousands in protected gullies and wait for warmer weather to return. The adult Common Crow can live for up to six months.



If everything goes smoothly, raising these caterpillars can be an enchanting experience for the students.

Frank Jordan

PLANT PROFILE

Rock Ledge Daisy (*Gynura drymophila*)

The Rock Ledge Daisy is an unassuming plant that normally grows on mountains and in the pockets of soil or leaf litter on rock ledges. It has succulent leaves, which is quite unusual for an Australian plant. Some plants have hairy leaves while others are smooth. The small orange flowers don't have the showy petals usually associated with daisies. The dandelion style seeds float away in the wind.

Although small, the flowers are an attractive source of nectar for the Common Crow and Blue Tiger butterflies. At one point my plant had six Common Crows and one Blue Tiger feeding from its flowers. The flowering lasted about a month, though it may produce more flowers if it wasn't invariably found and eaten by Magpie Moth larvae.

The Magpie Moth is a small black and white day flying moth about a third the size of the Common Crow. The small hairy caterpillars can make short work of even the largest plant.

Normally I don't mind and even look forward to visits from these caterpillars but this is the first year I have actually had this plant flowering for any length of time. Otherwise I may never have noticed its usefulness as a nectar plant or managed to collect any seeds. (This year I transferred all caterpillars to their other host, the Thickhead).

I have usually grown my plants in pots in order to provide the good drainage this daisy receives in its native habitat. Broken sunlight suits these plants the best. Because the daisy is at home in cooler mountain areas, it sometimes succumbs to root rot during the hot, humid months of January/ February. Cuttings strike readily without any special treatment. The few seed I have obtained germinated easily.

It is not a showy nectar plant like some well known exotics such as lantana or pentas, and because of this it is not normally available in nurseries. It does illustrate the need for more people to grow different kinds of native plants. Once we have them in our backyards we can constantly observe them and discover their secrets. Until then, we'll just have to rely on those adventurous climbers of mountains.

Frank Jordan



YOU ASKED

Question:

I saw lots of long winding tracks on the trunks of some smooth barked eucalypts.
What made them?

If these tracks were made up of rows of small circular marks they are probably the feeding tracks of an unusual native slug. It is white with a red triangle on its back. This slug hides in the ground or in the leaf litter during the day and feeds during the night. The scientific name of the animal is *Triboniophorus graeffei*.

Frank Jordan

BOOK REVIEW

Corrigenda: In the Book Review on pages 17 and 18 of the last newsletter please correct the following – Page 17, second full paragraph, second last line, add this omission after: “(with” ‘page numbers), this should have been supplemented by’ “cross-referencing” and remove the bracket after the word “cross-referencing”. This omission had completely changed the meaning to the exact opposite of what the review author had intended, i.e criticism of the fact that there was no cross-referencing. Also first word, line 7 of 3rd para. – PRAXEDES and on page 18, line 2 second para – STAGE not STATE. Lastly instead of “Zebra” Blue line 5 – 3rd para of page 17 replace with “Common Dusky”.

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES TO WATCH

The web site for this issue provides links to images, biology, behaviour, life histories and descriptions of 654 Australian Lepidoptera species including 307 with caterpillar pictures compiled by Don Herbison-Evans and Stella A. Crossley.
<http://linus.socs.uts.edu.au/~don/larvae/list.html>

LIBRARY BOOKS FOR LOAN

The following books are currently available for loan at meetings:-

Australia's Butterflies, by Peter Wilson

Butterfly Magic, by Helen Schwencke and Frank Jordan

Australian Cicadas, by Max Moulds

Butterflies of Australia, by Common and Waterhouse, 1981

Butterfly Watching, by Paul Whalley

ADS AND EXCHANGES

Sometimes you may have an oversupply of legally obtained caterpillars of non restricted species and your food supply will not hold out. If this happens, contact Rob MacSloy - 07 3824 4348 - who operates the Register of Host Plants. He can put you in touch with prospective “foster parents”. Have **YOU** advised Rob of the host plants you have available?



BUTTERFLY AND OTHER INVERTEBRATES CLUB PROGRAMME

End of Year Gathering

When: Saturday 12th December, 1998
Where: Enoggera Creek/Vera Moffat's property (as per notice mailed earlier) followed by BBQ, light trapping and fireflies at Jolly's

AGM & Excursion to Toohey Forest looking for ant-associated butterflies

When: Saturday, 23rd January, 1.30pm
Where: Toohey Mountain Scout Group Den, 6 Solna St., Tarragindi
What: The AGM will take a short time, to be followed directly by the excursion
RSVP: Helen ph: 3844 6677, fax: 3844 4333, email
hschwenc@ucaqld.com.au

Redland Bay – Marsh and Mangroves

When: Saturday 13th February, 1999
What: We hope to see a colony of Mangrove Jewel butterflies, bright orange Cornelians and Black and White Tigers amongst their hostplant, the Hoya-like, *Cynanchum carnosum*. Big Greasys and their hostplant, the small (as yet unnamed) species of *Aristolochia* should also be present.
Contact: You will need to register with John Moss to confirm date, time and place. ph. 3245 2997.

If there is a particular speaker you wish to hear or a particular event you wish to attend, it would be wise to phone the contact for that event in case, for some unforeseen circumstance, the event has had to be postponed or cancelled.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Producing this newsletter is done due to the efforts of:

- Those who sent in letters and articles
- Lois Hughes who provided illustrations
- Daphne Bowden who works on layout, production and distribution
- Steve McGoldrick who works on production and layout
- Georgina John who works on editorial content and helps with design
- Helen Schwencke who developed the overall design and works on content
- Lois Hughes who developed the cover design
- Frank Jordan for inspiration

We would like to thank all these people for their contribution

ARE YOU A MEMBER

Please check your mailing label for the date your membership is due for renewal. If your membership is due, please renew as soon as possible.

Butterfly and Other Invertebrates Club Inc.

c/- PO Box 2041

Runcorn Q 4113

**Next Meeting: Saturday 23rd January, 1999 – AGM and Toohey Forest
Excursion**

